

National Wilderness Awards

Bob Marshall Award for External Champion of Wilderness Stewardship-Bill Hodge of the Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards (SAWS) – Mr. Hodge is being recognized for his overall contributions to the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest Wilderness Program. Over the years, Mr. Hodge provided the first SAWS Wilderness Ranger Course for the Chattahoochee National Forests, partnered with Conasauga and Blue Ridge Ranger District personnel to accomplish priority wilderness projects, and helped accomplish key mission critical resource work on the ground tied to the Forest Service 10 Year Wilderness Challenge objectives. In addition, he has served on the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance (NWSA) Board since its inception, hosted the second NWSA national conference in North Carolina, and has continued to work tirelessly to bring veterans and underserved youth to wilderness for life changing experiences and stewardship efforts. His work has had life-long impacts to the resources and people and exemplifies the true meaning of being a “wilderness steward.”

Bob Marshall Award for Internal Champion of Wilderness Stewardship-Justin Preisendorfer of the White Mountain National Forest. –Mr Preisendorfer is being recognized for his significant contributions to the Forest Service wilderness program and his exemplary leadership in wilderness on the ground and through efforts nationally as an active member of the Chief’s Wilderness Advisory Group (WAG). Mr. Preisendorfer’s efforts as Chair of the WAG and prior to that as a regional representative to the WAG, have been instrumental to keeping the group focused and progressive. In addition, Mr. Preisendorfer’s recent work with the Draft Animal Powered Network to remove over six tons of bridge components out of the Pemigewasset Wilderness using draft horses over snow has been heralded regionally and nationally as an excellent example of what being a wilderness steward is all about.

Bob Marshall Award for Group Champion of Wilderness Stewardship-Ian Nelson Northern California/Southern Oregon Regional Representative and the Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA) – Mr. Nelson and the PCTA are being recognized for their great enthusiasm and ability to mobilize volunteers for trail maintenance in the Sky Lakes and Red Butte Wilderness Areas. Their efforts have led to improved conditions on the ground as well as more public contacts with Wilderness users by informed and knowledgeable volunteers. Specifically, Mr. Nelson and PCTA have promoted and organized an annual Trails Skills College that trains a host of volunteers in a variety of topics, such as basic trail maintenance, tread and drainage techniques, new trail construction, trail decommissioning, and chain saw and cross cut saw bucking certification and recertification. Their efforts to pursue new partnerships with individuals and groups throughout southern Oregon and northern California have been incredibly successful and are a wonderful example of “championing wilderness stewardship.”

Bob Marshall Award for Partnership Champion in Wilderness Stewardship -McKenzie Jensen and the Mt. Hood National Forest Wilderness Stewardship Program- Ms. Jensen is being recognized for her outstanding work with the Mount hood Wilderness Stewardship Program. The Mount Hood Wilderness Stewardship Program began in 2001 after a wilderness planning process proposed to greatly reduce access to the Mt. Hood Wilderness. Frequent users of the wilderness committed to devote more time and effort toward wilderness protection in lieu of use limits. It started small with around 5-10 regular stewards for a season. Since Ms. Jensen's arrival to the program in 2009 the role and size of the program has greatly expanded. Participation is now 30-50 volunteers per season and expands to all wilderness areas on the Forest. Her partnership efforts have expanded to include the Back Country Horsemen, Oregon Equestrian Trails, The Mazamas, Pacific Crest Trail Association, Oregon Nordic Club and other key partners. With the development of their own non-agency web site and a resulting "Wilderness Steward Box" that is accessible at all hours, these organizations have found a way to coordinate very diverse groups and keep them on task within their skill level and safety. This has been made possible through the efforts of Ms. Jensen and exemplify how being a "partnership champion for wilderness stewardship" can have positive impacts for present and future generations.

Traditional Skills and Minimum Tool Leadership Award-Ron Taussig White River National Forest, Blanco Ranger District.- Mr. Taussig has served as the wilderness, recreation, and trails manager for 36 years on the Blanco Ranger District, White River National Forest. In this role he has carefully managed the Flat Tops Wilderness Areas since their designation. Mr. Taussig has long been recognized for his high standards in trail and bridge construction. In addition to his trail building skill, Mr. Taussig has always been known to go the extra mile to preserve wilderness values through teaching his primitive wilderness skills to others. He has taught and impassioned numerous seasonal employees and volunteers in primitive skills such as horse and mule packing, cross cut saw work, map reading, wilderness camping, and leave no trace. Mr. Taussig has worked tirelessly to perpetuate wilderness values throughout his career and is a leader in helping prepare the next generation in the use of traditional skills and minimum tools.

Wilderness Education Leadership Award-Tim and Barbara Lydon Wilderness Rangers, Glacier Ranger District, Chugach National Forest.- Tim and Barbara are being recognized for their passion and outstanding contributions in promoting and preserving Alaska's wilderness character. Mr. Lydon authored a thorough Education Plan that identified methods, goals, and venues for education surrounding the Nellie Juan-College Fjord Wilderness Study Area (NJCF WSA). This draft plan aligns the Chugach Forest Focus Areas and the objectives of the Chugach Children's Forest to help guide managers toward effective, transparent, and cost efficient programs that inspire visitors about their place in the natural world and the value of public lands. In addition, Tim and Barbara executed an exceptional teacher's expedition in the NJCF WSA. This was done by partnering with Alaska Geographic, Iditarod Trail to Every Classroom, University of Alaska Anchorage, Discovery Southeast, a local outfitter and guide and providing a field based class to teachers, highlighting the natural world and the value of our public lands in the classroom. They also brought the first artist in residency program to the NJCF WSA. Ms. Lydon's efforts resulted in the first National Park to partner with the Forest Service in this program. Their continued contributions will live on for generations with the expansion of wilderness education.

Excellence in Wilderness Stewardship Research Award-*Andrew Jacob Larson, R. Travis Belote, Courtney Alina Cansler, Sean Aaron Parks, and Matthew Deitz; Department of Forest Management, University of Montana; The Wilderness Society; School of Environmental and Forest Sciences, University of Washington; Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute, Rocky Mountain Research Station.* This collaboration of researchers is being recognized for their joint production of a research publication pertaining to managing natural processes in wilderness. The article “Latent Resilience in Ponderosa Pine Forest: Effects of Resumed Frequent Fire”, published in the Journal of Ecological Applications, reports on a study of forest structure and composition in the Bob Marshall Wilderness following the reintroduction of fire after decades of exclusion. Pertinent to many questions commonly asked about fire and wilderness today, this study is timely and provides information for use and consideration by wilderness managers into the future. It recognizes the importance of continuing to ask the right questions and providing research to assist in wilderness stewardship into the future.

Excellence in Research Application Award-*Laura Lopez-Hoffman, Darius Semmens, and Jay Diffendorfer. School of Natural Resources and Environment, Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, University of Arizona, USGS, Denver Federal Center.* This collaboration of researchers are being recognized for the production of an innovative research study on the value associated with migratory species and wilderness. The research itself focuses heavily on what is referred to as “supporting services.” While the protection of wilderness attributes is known to support flora, fauna and natural processes, the actual efforts to calculate the magnitude of these benefits is almost nonexistent. Quantifying the spatial subsidies one location provides to, or receives, from others may become much more common in a future globalized world. This team describes not only a process to calculate these migratory values, but also points out important data needs in order to do this. This research is an outstanding example of current research to assist managers in developing decision support tools and communicating tradeoffs to a diverse set of stakeholders.

Aldo Leopold Award for Overall Wilderness Stewardship Program-*Steve Kimball, John Neary, Brad Hunter Karisa Gardner, Jacob Hofman, Victoria Houser, Bill Tremblay, Teresa Hunt, David Rak, Geno Cisneros, Jennifer MacDonald, Lorelei Haukness, Dain Kelly, Kevin Hood, Rick Turner, Patty Krosse, Karen Dillman, Marina Whitacre- Tongass National Forest.* These individuals from the Tongass National Forest are being recognized for their efforts to conduct comprehensive wilderness character monitoring. To accomplish this task the wilderness managers, working with the Aldo Leopold Institute, took the initiative to adapt the national wilderness character framework to meet local needs across 5.7 million acres; including the establishment of a base line for long term sustainability of wilderness in the Tongass. Their work incorporated efforts of two partner groups, Sitka Conservation Society and the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council and includes using citizen volunteers to conduct surveys, identify invasives, report unauthorized activity and perform a variety of other monitoring tasks. In addition, this group has also done educational plans for all 19 wilderness areas in Alaska and completed a fire management plan that includes direction for fires and a wilderness fire check list. Their work has been is an excellent example of a comprehensive wilderness stewardship program.

National Wild and Scenic River Awards

Outstanding Stewardship of River Resources- *Smith River Alliance* - For over 30 years, the Smith River Alliance has been the primary partner with the Forest Service in the protection, management, and stewardship of the 300 mile Smith River WSR system in Northern California. The Alliance has been instrumental in securing land acquisitions, prompting local river planning and delivering river stewardship education activities for youth and local communities within the Smith River watershed. Their work and the positive results exemplify what it means to implement “outstanding stewardship of river resources.”

Outstanding River Manager/River Ranger- *Heather Berg, Clearwater – Nez Perce National Forest* – For the past eleven years Ms. Berg has been the voice of WSR’s for the Clearwater-Nez Perce National Forest. In this time, she has completed numerous Section 7 determinations, administered over 240 conservation easements, managed a variety of recreation special use permits, and worked with many different partners to protect the WSR resources of the Middle Fork Clearwater, Lochsa, Main Salmon, Rapid River, and Selway WSR’s. Ms. Berg’s contributions to these river resources are a great example of an “outstanding river manager.”